

**18<sup>th</sup> Black Men's Gathering  
Green Acre Baha'i School**

**17 July 2004**

**Dr. H. Elsie Austin  
27114 Bumble Bee Street  
San Antonio, Texas 78258**

**Our beloved Knight of Baha'u'llah,**

**It is with a sense of love and admiration that we, one hundred and seventeen men of African descent, send our greetings from the 18<sup>th</sup> Black Men's Gathering at Green Acre School. It should bring joy to your heart to know that an astute observer has stated that the Black Men's Gathering represents the unity of the tribes of Africa.**

**During the course of the Gathering, we prayed, studied and consulted on ways to embrace our nobility as the "pupil of the eye" in order to serve as a beacon of light to a harassed humanity.**

**Champions of the Faith such as yourself are a source of inspiration and have set the standard of service and sacrifice to which we must arise. Challenges before us are many but we well know that for every crisis we are assured of victories.**

**The Gathering received an historic letter from the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States, dated 13 July 2004. It addressed our "special designation as the 'pupil of the eye' while also sadly informing us that the House of Mirza Buzurg-i-Nuri had been destroyed with the implicit approval of the Iranian government. With great love and a heartfelt yearning for us to embrace our unique station, they shared the following quote from Baha'u'llah which was a source of intense consultation: "Should they attempt to conceal its light on the continent, it will assuredly rear its head in the midmost heart of the ocean, and, raising its voice, proclaim: 'I am the life-giver of the world!'"**

**As a result of our consultation, we made "solemn vows" to teach the Cause of the Blessed Beauty with a heightened sense of urgency and audaciousness. And we will do so in obedience to the following guidance from our beloved Universal House of Justice (Ridvan 2004): "...continue confidently and dynamically in the present direction, undeterred by storms battering the world of humanity."**

**We wish you a belated happy 97<sup>th</sup> birthday. Know that you are in our thoughts and prayers, and we humbly request your prayers for the success of our spiritual endeavors. We love you.**

**18<sup>th</sup> Black Men's Gathering**